

# ***The BIA-NEws***

Official Newsletter of the **Brain Injury Association of Nebraska**—April, 2010  
“Linking brain injury survivors across Nebraska”

## **Fourth Annual Nebraska Brain Injury Conference— Networking March 25-26, 2010**



***Bill and Sue, Lincoln, at the social***

Well over last year's attendance, 270 people attended the recent conference in Grand Island. We were even surprised by TV coverage by KHAS, channel 5.

Our keynote speakers, Dr. Mike Mozzoni and Dr. Harvey Jacobs explained the behavioral challenges for children and adults with TBI, while special issues involving veterans were the focus of Army Col. Kenneth Lee, M.D.

Other presenters spoke about several treatment options for the brain injured, including hyperbaric oxygen therapy, the clubhouse model, and EEG neurofeedback therapy. In addition, techniques for overcoming employment

obstacles were of interest to some attendees, as well as a special forum for caregivers.

The social dance on Thursday night was well-attended and appreciated. It was an added chance to network in an informal, fun setting.

We hope all of you can attend next year, and by all means, let us know how we can address your needs, as we begin to plan for next year's conference.



***Kate, at our BIA-NE table***

Thank you, Kate Jaracke, BIA-NE's new Executive Director. You were a great raffle/social coordinator and a welcome addition to the conference planning committee. We look forward to seeing more of you in the future—both on the legislative floor and in our local support groups.

Contact Kate at [kkj.biane@gmail.com](mailto:kkj.biane@gmail.com) or 402-423-2463 (BINE) or 800-444-6443.

Coming soon: [www.BIANE.org](http://www.BIANE.org) or 1-800-444-6443



### Capitol Awareness Day 2010



*Our third annual Brain Injury Awareness Day was held March 10 at the State Capitol Building. Thank you to all who came out and showed their support for brain injury issues.*

During Awareness Day, Kate Jarecke of the BIA-NE presented the “Everyday Hero Award” to former Husker Linebacker Blake Lawrence for increasing awareness of the impact of sports concussions.

Lawrence was a linebacker for the Cornhuskers, but in the span of eighteen months, he had four concussions. He decided another one was not worth the risk. So last year he chose to end his football career. His decision received a lot of press and in the process brought great awareness to the impact of sports concussions and also the importance of being your own advocate.

His decision was supported by his coaches. Linebacker Coach Mike Ekeler told the BIA-NE, “Blake Lawrence is everything that is right about a student athlete. He was a huge part of the resurgence of the Blackshirts, before an injury cut his career short. He also exemplifies a scholar athlete, graduating

in business in two and a half years. Blake was a pleasure to coach, because he was the ultimate team player—being a tough, physical, hard-nosed football player, and not to mention an incredible person.”

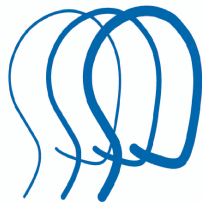
Jarecke told the crowd, “Blake, without realizing it, you had quite an impact on our organization—getting the word out to thousands of fans, young and old, who now hopefully will take the time to contemplate if it is worth going back into the game. For it is only a game. It is the players that matter. Blake, we are so happy to have you on our team.”

Following the award presentation, the attendees heard a legislative update from Senators Colby Coash and Steve Lathrop. Both of these legislators were instrumental in bringing brain injury issues to the debate on the helmet repeal legislation, LB 200.

Nebraska is the only state that doesn’t have either a TBI Trust fund or a resource facilitator. And that was our message to the senators during the helmet debate. Without either of these safeguards, repealing the helmet requirement would mean more individuals with TBI and no resources to take care of them. The bill to repeal the mandatory use of helmets did not pass this session.

The attendees at the Capitol then went to the Warner Chamber where Governor Heinemann signed a state proclamation to observe March as Brain Injury Awareness Month.

*~by Kate Jarecke*



### New Faces at BIA-NE

#### Director

The BIA-NE has hired Kate Kulesher Jarecke as the Executive Director of the Association. Kate has worked with the organization for the last three years, providing advocacy at the State Capitol.

"I am thrilled to continue my work advocating for brain injury services," Kate said. "The last three years have shown so much growth, I am so excited to see what the next three years bring."

She worked as a Director of State Government Affairs for Wyeth for the past 17 years. During that time she also served on the Lincoln/Lancaster County Board of Health, the Women's Health Advisory Council, and the Board of the Iowa Biotechnology Association.

Originally from Arlington, Virginia, Kate became a Nebraskan 17 years ago, when she married Dave Jarecke of Columbus, NE. They have two children Cole, 13 and Amelia, 10 and live in Lincoln.

#### Three New Board Members

During the Annual Meeting of the BIA-NE held during the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Brain Injury Conference, *Networking*, the Association elected three new members to the Board of Directors. They are Jacquie Cox, Judy Harvey, and Rondi Kinney.

Jacquie Cox works in Hastings for Goodwill Industries of Nebraska. She has been an Acquired Brain Injury

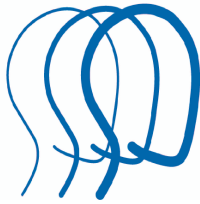
Specialist since February of 2008 and received the Brain Injury Specialist Certification in September of 2008. She works closely with clients to assess their needs and abilities and helps them learn tools and develop strategies for working within their capabilities.

Judy Harvey is a speech language pathologist with 17 years experience, working with survivors of brain injury in acute rehab. She is currently a clinician, supervisor, and education coordinator for the communication disorders department at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. She is the 2010 Vice President for the Nebraska Speech Language and Hearing Association.

Rondi Kinny joined Quality Living, Inc in Omaha as the Director of Long Term Care in 1998. She held that position until 2006, when she became the Director of Social Services, the position she currently holds.

#### About the Brain Injury Association of America:

Founded in 1980, the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) is the leading national organization serving and representing individuals, families, and professionals who are touched by a life-altering, often devastating, traumatic brain injury (TBI). Together with its network of more than 40 chartered state affiliates, as well as hundreds of local chapters and support groups across the country, the BIAA provides information, education and support to assist the 3.17 million Americans currently living with traumatic brain injury and their families.



## UNL Research Study

Erin Bush is conducting a study about the challenges and successes of brain injury survivors who work or have tried to work after their injury.

If you or a family member has had any work or volunteer experience following a brain injury other than stroke, she would appreciate your help in this study.

Contact Erin at (308) 672-3287 or [bushwinberg@hotmail.com](mailto:bushwinberg@hotmail.com).

**Contact Teresa Thompson, BIA-NE board secretary, for questions, ideas, or submissions to The BIA-NEws: [CrdCat@aol.com](mailto:CrdCat@aol.com) or 402-325-9232**

## Memberships

If you did not have the opportunity to sign up or renew your membership to BIA-NE during the annual conference in Grand Island last month, we would encourage you to do so now.

Send your check or money order, along with your name, address, phone number, and email address, to:

**BIA-NE  
3510 Old Dominion Road  
Lincoln, NE 68516**

The costs for membership are:

- Brain injury survivor \$5
- Family (including survivor) \$20
- Student \$25
- Professional \$75
- Corporate \$200